

A  
**Plea for Moderation**  
TOWARDS  
**DISSENTERS:**

Occasioned by

The *Grand-Juries* Presenting the SERMON  
AGAINST PERSECUTION at the  
last *Affizes* holden at *Sherburn* in *Dorset-shire*.

To which is Added,

An Answer to the Objections commonly  
made against that SERMON.

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By S A M U E L B O L D E,  
Author of the SERMON against PERSECUTION.

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*If a Man walking in the Spirit and Falshood do lie, saying, I  
will Prophecie unto thee of Wine and of Strong Drink, he shall  
even be the Prophet of this People, Mic. 2. 11.*

*They build up Zion with Blood, and Jerusalem with Iniquity,  
Mic. 3. 10.*

*Qui pacem & concordiam in Ecclesia vult esse, oportet eum rerum  
necessariarum confessione contentum esse, Jac. Acont. Strat. l. 7.*

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L O N D O N, Printed for R. Janeway, in *Queens-Head-  
Alley* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, 1683.

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A

# Plea for Moderation

TOWARDS

## DISSENTERS, &c.

**A**Mongst the many *Stratagems* Satan has invented and made use of to hinder the *progress* of *True Christianity*, his engaging some *Pretenders* to it, to appear extremely concern'd and zealous about *Unnecessary Rites and Ceremonies*, has not been the least *fatal*. For by advancing this *Point*, he hath induced many carnal, vicious, and sensual men to embrace this *Profession*, with (as it is very probable) a particular design to supplant its *Power*.

It is undeniably evident, that the *Primitive strict Discipline* of the Church, with relation to *Manners*, did decay answerably to the proportion of warmth, and zeal, men were allowed to lay out about *little Indifferences*. And when the Church was so far corrupted, as to busie her self mainly with making and executing such *Decrees and Orders* as did only relate to some *external and unnecessary Circumstances*, she did apparently decline the vigorous prosecuting those things in which *Religion* doth indeed consist.

And I am perswaded, one of the *Principal* things which hath hindered good men from an universal concurrence, in observing the same *Orders* about *Indifferent things*, is their observing that by this means, that strictness of practice, and holiness of conversation, which should most of all be minded, was in a great measure neglected, and almost decry'd as a *needless singularity and preciseness*.

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It is certain this did open a very wide door for those to enter into the Communion of the Church, and prevailed very much for the continuing of them in that Communion, and for the having of them *incouraged* and *carest*, whose vicious courses made *Christianity* evil *spoken* of by *Strangers*; and who according to the *Ancient Rules and Canons* of the Church, should have had the Censures of the Church inflicted on them, to the casting them out of her Communion, not any more to be admitted, without giving extraordinary evidences and demonstrations of their being brought to better minds.

And this sort of People having thus insinuated themselves into the Church, did soon obtain so great an interest, as to alter the very *Design, Intention* and *Use* of those *Instances* which were appointed by Christ Himself. They procured such *Restrictions* to be laid on Peoples communicating in *Divine Ordinances*, that whereas before none were to communicate, but such as had in the course of their lives given good evidence that they *feared God, and worked Righteousness*, now none must communicate but only those who would observe such *Outward Orders, Humane Constitutions, and Unnecessary Rites*. And whereas anciently the Censures of the Church, especially *Excommunication*, was not inflicted on any, unless they were *stubborn opposers* of the *Christian Faith*, or were guilty of some great *Immorality* in their Practice, they had now brought the Christian Religion to consist mainly in two Points, viz. *Dignity* and *Outward Rites*, and consequently the Censures of the Church were inflicted principally for peoples not being implicitly and blindly obedient.

There was now nothing known to be *disorderly walking*, but not observing *appointed Rites*; nor no *Disobedience*, but when people would not own their Authority in every thing they enjoyn'd. And then men might be as vicious as they pleas'd, *swear*, and be *drunk*, and commit all manner of *lewdness*, and yet be admirable *Zealous Christians*, because they were for the Church. But if a man were ever so pious, strict, chaste, and every way truly Religious, yet if he would not pay them every Groat they did unjustly demand, or would not observe every Ceremony they did enjoyn, they presently summon'd him, and if he would not then yield a blind obedience to their Order, they forthwith gave him to the Devil.



Men, tho extremely vicious, yet having not worn away all sense of Religion, are willing to strike in with that way, which has most publick countenance, especially if they perceive that some *Outward Formalities* are by that part most *Rigidly* insisted on, and that by shewing a great zeal for these things they may both *satisfie* for their other *Immoralities*, and be reputed, according to *common Vogue*, Religious to a *High Degree*.

And no wonder then, if such as these do in any Age give out themselves for the only Sons of the Church, when they find the observation of these outward Ceremonies is very consistent with the Lusts and Vices they are most fond of, and that much profit will accrue, by prosecuting others who are not satisfied in these things, and whose exemplary lives are a reproach and shame to them. “ Men being very loath to put themselves to the trouble of a Holy life, are very ready to embrace any thing, which may but dispen-  
“ ce with that; and if but listing themselves under such a Party may but  
“ shelter them under a disguise of Religion, none more ready than  
“ such to be known by distinguishing Names, none more zealous in  
“ the defence of every Tittle and Punctilio that lies most remote  
“ from those essential Duties wherein the Kingdom of God con-  
“ sists, *viz.* Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.

*Dr Stilling. Pref.  
to his Iren.*

But the Church is undoubtedly under very unhappy Circumstances, which cannot have any owned for her Children, who will not imitate the worst of men in their groundless zeal, their inhumane barbarity, and their detestable and most enormous Immoralities. And as I have hitherto been speaking of what has been done in former Ages, so I will adventure to say at present concerning pretenders to the Church of *England*, if there be any who go under this Character, who would willingly bring this Church under the same unhappy Circumstances I have before mentioned, they are the greatest Enemies she can possibly have.

As Satan has proved too successful formerly, in endeavouring to fill the Church with wicked superstitious men, so he has done himself great service, by instigating people to force others to comply in the use of *needless Rites*, by great and pressing *Penalties*. For this hath proved a very powerful Expedient to advance two of those Designs he doth principally endeavour to have furthered in the world.



1. It yields a very plausible pretence, under which wicked men may vent their wrath, and envy, and malice. For tho these Bigots talk of the Church and Religion, yet they give too much evidence in their carriage, that what they do is the Fruit of that Rancour they have long cherished in their Breasts, and which has quite Cankered their Spirits. The pretences these men do make, are but Colours under which they may more decorously vent their venom and malignity.

2. It tends much to the utter extirpating of that Love, and Charity, and Meekness, which are commended by Christ and his Apostles as the *Vital Parts*, the Honor and Glory of the Christian Religion.

Satan has created the Church much trouble by causing Divisions amongst Christians. Sometimes he has suggested *Errors* and *False Doctrines* to some who have professed Christianity, and then has irritated them to make Parties, and adhere resolutely to those *Tenets* against all the Demonstrations the *Orthodox* could give them both of the falseness of their *Opinions*, and how pernicious they would be in their *Consequences*. But I think he has done Religion more Disservice by hurrying men into *undue* and *peevish Heats* about *Humane Devices*, than he has been able to do, by instigating men to broach and publish such Doctrines as have had an immediate plain and direct tendency to overthrow Christianity. For under a pretence of the Innocency of these former Instances, and the great Benefit some pious men have concluded would follow from the use of them, and the plausible Arguments they might easily urge for them, he has first of all prevailed with men to lay out too much of their Zeal about these things, and then by degrees has gone so far, as to obtain those very Instances, which were at first designed by good men to be used only as *Decent* and *Comely Ceremonies*, to be taught and enjoined as *Doctrines of Christianity*.

We have too many Instances of this in the *Church of Rome*. I will mention but one. There is no great doubt to be made, but that the primary design of those who first brought *Pictures* and *Images* into Churches, was innocent; but these had not been long there, before Satan corrupted mens minds, and drew them to pay them a Divine and Religious Worship. Yea he prevailed with the Leading and Governing part of the Church to espouse that Cause

Cause so heartily, they did contend and declare that Images not only ought to be set up, but to be worshipped.

Every man who hath taken any tollerable notice of the History of former times, must certainly know the Church of Christ has been often very miserably torn and rent, and divided, on the account of Indifferent Ceremonies. Some have stubbornly refused to comply in the use of those Rites for which others have had an extraordinary kindness, and these being impatient of that Denial, have been too fierce and rigorous in imposing what they have said they did believe would be very useful.

And what has been just matter of complaint in former Ages, is thorough the Craft of Satan, and wicked Hypocrisie of carnal men, a more than ordinary ground of *Fear* and *Trouble* to this *present Generation*.

We who profess our selves Protestants, have stood a great while at some distance, and of late our Difference has been exceedingly heightened, nay it is to be feared many attempts have been made by some sort of People, to render us wholly unreconcilable.

This is the more Deplorable, and has a more Direful Aspect, because we do on both sides lie under more than ordinary engagements to unite as speedily and firmly as we can. Besides the nature and tendency of our Religion, and all that excellent provision Christianity doth make to keep its Professors from Jars and unseemly Quarrels, making Meekness, and Peace, and Love, and Condescension, and mutual Forbearance, some of its Vital Parts. Besides this, and all the ordinary inducements to Union, we are now in a very audible and visible manner called on, and importuned to do all we can on each side to unite. *We must either unite, or we must perish*. It is high time to leave off insisting on little *pointilios* of Honour; we ought duly to weigh our circumstances, and the nature of the things we Contend about, and if our *Dangers* be *unmeasurably great*, and the things we differ about such as will not bear so great a weight, as the *loss* of our *Religion* and *all our Rights*, we must yield something on either side, and that side must be willing to part with most, that can do it with greatest ease, and most innocence.

Many eminent persons have imploy'd their thoughts to find out Expedients by which our Common Enemy, the Papists, may be hindred

hindered from getting so much advantage by our Differences as they expect. No doubt the Papists have had a great influence in increasing our Divisions. They have been Industrious in labouring to exasperate men, and work their Passions beyond all Government and Moderation. Nay tho some of our *Make-bates*, who do wholly imploy their Talents to widen our Differences, do pretend to the *Church of England*, I am verily perswaded they are either *Real Papists*, or very *Mischievous Instruments* in *Popish hands*, to effect and bring about the *common Ruine of Protestants*.

The weakening of the Protestant Cause, be it under what pretence soever, is undoubtedly very serviceable to the Papists; and whether this be done, by keeping up mutual Animosities and Contentions amongst us, to the weakening and impairing the strength of both sides, or by irritating the superior and prevailing part to squeeze and subdue the other by their power and might, is equally acceptable to them. This latter cuts off that supply the stronger part would undoubtedly have from the other, when assaulted by the *Common Enemy*. It is Policy in the Papists to imploy some of their own Party to counterfeit, and feign, and pretend themselves of the *Church of England*, and then ingage them and others under that pretence to endeavour the ruine of those they call *Dissenters*, not only because they hate them, but because they know that having done thus, they shall be more successful in attempting the *Church of England*.

However, they are certain, if they can make us the *Executioners* of their *Rage* against our fellow *Protestants*, they shall be better able to grapple with, and execute their own wrath on the *Church of England*, when single and by *Her self*. He that encouraged the two Countrymen in their Quarrel, and provoked them to fight with one another, till they were both absolutely tired, and when they were thus wearied, did murder them both, would no doubt have taken his *Revenge* on the *Survivor*, if one of them had killed the other.

Amongst the many Methods and Expedients found out for effecting a firm and lasting Union amongst Protestants, I think Dr. *Stillingsfleet* in his early years did hit on a very clear and infallible one, if it might be universally attended to, and countenanced by those in power. " Were we so happy  
 " but to take off things granted unnecessary by all, and  
 suspected

*Trinit.*  
*P. 121.*



“ suspected by many ; and judged unlawful by some ; and to  
 “ make nothing the bound, of our Communion, but what Christ  
 “ hath done, viz. one Faith, one Baptism, &c. allowing a li-  
 “ berty for matters of Indifferency, and bearing for the weak-  
 “ ness of those, who cannot bear things which others account law-  
 “ ful, we might indeed be restored to a true Primitive lustre, far  
 “ sooner than by furbishing up some antiquated Ceremonies,  
 “ which can derive their Pedigree no higher than from some an-  
 “ cient Custom and Tradition : God will one day convince men  
 “ that the Union of the Church lies more in the unity of Faith  
 “ and Affection, than in uniformity of doubtful Rites and Ceremo-  
 “ nies.

It is a very great instance of the deplorable Degeneracy of  
 this Age, that there are so many professed Enemies to all *Moderation*  
 towards them who have different Apprehensions concerning  
 the *Indifferent Appendages* to our *Publick Worship*. Nay their zeal  
 against this Moderation transports them into such *indecenties*, they  
 will not only have it expunged the number of *Christian Virtues*,  
 but they dare decry all who own and plead for it, as the worst of  
 men. Instead of Observing that Rule given by  
 the Apostle, *Let your Moderation (a virtue inclining*  
*us to such a kind of benign and equitable temper in our*  
*conversing with one another; whereby we may endeavour*  
*to preserve concord and amity in our treating concerning those things a-*  
*bout which we differ) be known unto all men,* they seem to read it back-  
 ward, and do in their practice publish to the world they be re-  
 solved to let their *Rage* and *Fury* be known to all men.

Phil. 4. 5. Bp.  
 Wilkins. Sermon.  
 P. 394.

But the Hurt would not be so great, if they would only pub-  
 lish their wilde and untameable Temper under a *Private Name*,  
 and not strive to injure and bespatter the *Church of England*, by  
 pretending her *Patronage*.

Moderation is not only a Christian Duty, but a peculiar Orna-  
 ment to any Church which doth espouse and practise it. And  
 therefore those who do labour to represent the *Church of England*,  
 under another Character, by pretending to her in their fierce and  
 outrageous carriages, do as much as they can to baptise her *An-*  
*richristian*, and under a pretence of justifying themselves in their  
 worst Demeanor, do strip her of one of the greatest Excellencies,  
 and chiefest Ornaments the Christian Church doth enjoy, and  
 can glory in.

The

The ordinary matters, in dispute between us and other Protestants, are not of that *Moment* we should be so zealous and passionate about them. Christian love and charity must not be lost and thrown away for such things. Indeed where these are in any considerable Degree, they will do very much to allay and quench those Heats, into which passionate and inconsiderate people are too apt to be unduly hurried.

We have at this time greater things which call for our zeal and concern to be imploy'd about: And the dangers we are in of losing them should mightily operate on us, and make us cautious, lest by any unfuitable carriage we should be any way instrumental to make that *breach wider*, though which *Popery* is apparently labouring to thrust her self in amongst us. The great and weighty matters of Religion, the very Fundamentals of Christianity are now assaulted by the *Papists*. And if they can get but a little more advantage, we shall be in danger of having *new Articles* added to our *Creed*, and *new Sacraments* administred in our *Churches*. And therefore whilst in danger of having such *Innovations* obtruded on us, we cannot have any time or leisure (if heartily concerned for our Religion and our Souls) to fall out and quarrel with one another about *Old Rites and Ceremonies*.

It is very sad to consider with what heat our present Differences are managed on every hand, and that which doth very much *Hurt*, is that debauch'd and lew'd people are suffered to blow up our Divisions into much greater flames and distances, than they would rise to, if only learned and serious, and pious men had the managing of them. What! is it not high time to agree amongst our selves, now that *Hannibal is at our Gates*? shall we give no hopes of an union amongst our selves, till being Sacrifices to our Enemies *Fury*, we meet on both sides in *Popish Flames*, to witness to the same Religion? "Such blustering boisterous Tempers as are all for the great River *Euphrates*, which runs with a torrent and a mighty noise, and refuse the still waters of *Shiloah*, which run soft and gently, as the Prophet speaks, *Isa. 8. 6*. Such are no friends to peace, because 'tis the latter which is the River whose streams must make glad the City of God, *Psal 46. 4*. that is, must promote the quiet and flourishing state of the Church, as a Reverend Prelate hath elegantly exprest it.

*Bp. Wilkins*

*Serm. p. 424.*

*Bp. Andrews Serm.*

It is true and pure Christianity we must mainly discover our Zeal for; and for other matters we must reduce them to their proper Sphere and place, and allow them no more of our affection and Zeal, than in their own nature they deserve, and the Exigence of the Church doth call for. Our Saviour lays no stress on any thing but Real Practical Religion; he does rather Caution us against too much Zeal about *Mint and Cummin* (lest this should eat up the heart and life, and spirit of our Devotion) than oblige us to a particular and eminent discovery of great and extraordinary warmth about those things in which Real Religion is not immediately concerned.

We find the Apostles upon mature deliberation, and when they had the immediate assistance and guidance of the Spirit, would lay no more on the Disciples, than what was then Necessary. And it would be no difficult thing to shew that they were not Rigid towards those who did omit, and even refuse, afterwards to observe some of those Injunctions they concluded necessary to be observed in that Juncture of Affairs, when they made that Determination.

I know some do insist very much on this Question, Whether the Apostles had not power to determine Indifferent Ceremonies, so as to oblige the Church in her several Administrations to the use of some, and to forbear the use of all others; and whether if any Professors of Christianity should obstinately have refused to comply with those Orders, the Apostles might not innocently and justly have Excommunicated them for their Contempt?

Such kind of Questions as these are very unnecessary, and I am affraid those who are so frequent in proposing these things in Company, as some in the world are, have a design to trepan and insnare the unwary. I will say no more to this Point at present, than

1<sup>st</sup>. First of all, That I believe the Apostles had as much Authority and Power, as any of those have who pretend to be their Successors.

2<sup>ly</sup>. That they had so great a measure of Divine Grace communicated to them, as did effectually restrain them from using their Authority arbitrarily, or in an inordinate and hurtful way.

3<sup>ly</sup>.

They  
did



3<sup>ly</sup>. They never made use of their Power, that we read of, about these indifferent and unnecessary points. And therefore whether they would have proceeded to such Censures as some talk of, if they had appointed any number of Rites, and had not been obeyed, is not evident enough, to convince and satisfy inquisitive men.

The Question lies mainly here, Whether if they had exerted this Power, without Divine Direction, they would have resented every thing, Imperious and Haughty men have in after Ages called Contempts, with the same passion they have done? 'Tis plain they thought it, if not more Christian, yet more prudent, to forbear laying Snairs in peoples way, and chose rather to suspend the exercise of their Authority about these things, than to make any unseasonable use of it, and than vindicate it by so severe a course, as their delivering men unto Satan did amount to.

4<sup>ly</sup>. I think it will be very difficult for any man to make it appear, that for some hundreds of years after the Apostles, the Christian Orthodox Church did ever require any thing more than common Christianity as a Term of Church-Communion. Or that any Ceremony was for so long a time imposed on the Church.

This is not designed in the least to reflect on the Church of England, or to except against any of Her Orders; it is designed only to shew,

1. That neither Christianity in the general, nor the Being of a particular Church, is concerned in our Dispute; and that therefore, considering our present Circumstances, there is no need of discovering such immoderate heat in this business, as some men do manifest, and expect that all who pretend to the Church should approve.

*Jacobus Acontius is of the opinion, that God doth not allow the Church to use severe courses, even against Hereticks, lest those, when they obtain the power and government, should*

2. That some of those who do dissent from us, may have more plausible pretences for what they do, than some, who are inconsiderately furious against them, do imagin.

But allowing that there may sometimes happen such cases, that the Church may; and ought to proceed to great severity with some offenders, we cannot reasonably conclude hence, that

that every difference about outward Rites and Ceremonies, especially if managed with meekness, and other Christian Virtues, by those who do dissent, must be treated and prosecuted in that manner. This would be to make the Church transcribe that Quack's folly, who perceiving a skilful Chyrurgeon had saved a mans life, and done him great service by cutting off his Legg, when desperately gangreen'd, did advise one who was troubled with the Head-ach to have his Head cut off. The same Medecine will not cure every Disease, nor may the same Remedy be applied to every part.

Moderation in these lesser things is certainly very desirable ; it may do the Church great service. And whilst we are not obliged by any Law to prosecute and ruine those who are not of our Judgment in these things, either unnecessarily to turn Informers our selves, or to wheedle or threaten others into such Courses, is very unbecoming any who profess they have a desire to befriend the Protestant Religion *in this day*.

The Church of *England* is undoubtedly a very strong, and would be (if it were not for these violent and headstrong Bigots, who in danger the ruining the Protestant Religion under a glorious name and pretence) an Impregnable Bulwark against Popery. But she is not so by her injoyning any Ceremonies, in which point she and other Protestants do differ, but in her close and immovable adhering to those Doctrines and Practices which are common to us, with the generality of our sober and only scrupulous Dissenters, and which are directly contrary to and destructive of Popery.

I dare affirm, That if the Rites and Ceremonies now in use in the Church of *England*, should be altered, some changed, and some laid wholly aside, by the same Authority which

*treat the Orthodox in the same manner. His Stratag. Satan. and the Book called the Samaritan, and those Tracts called, The Conformists Plea for the Non-conformists, which do all favour of a most Christian, moderate, and Healing Spirit, do particularly deserve to be read, digested, and considered, over and over again, by those who are inclined to suffer their hasty and passionate Tempers to have their whole swing. These would do them much more real Service, if attended to, and observed, than those trivial scraps of paper can, which they do weekly dote upon, and which at best can only furnish them with a few jejune, puerile, and nauseous Notices, and for the most part do impose on their beliefs the most scandalous and enormous untruths.*

did at first injoin them, the Church of *England* would still be as Impregnable a Bulwark against Popery, as now she is. And I am fully satisfied there is no man will deny this, unless he be either a Real Papist, or an Ignorant Superstitious Fool.

Nor is this all that may be alledged, why we should be cautious of dealing harshly with those who differ from us in these things, and against whom we have nothing else to except. For the very Consideration of the Fruit and Effect the continued imposing of these things has had on many, should both abate our vehemence against Dissenters, and make us generally more inclinable to desire that some Abatements might be *legally* made in these things, for the satisfying of those, who still remain unsatisfied.

There are two dreadful Events, which have followed these Impositions.

1. Many worthy, pious, and otherwise every way qualified Persons, have been hindred from either entering or continuing in the Lords Vineyard, to labour and work publicly there.

2. The constant imposed use of these things hath almost unavoidably begot in the minds of ignorant and vulgar people, a belief that they are indispensably necessary, and undoubted parts of those Ordinances to which they are annexed. I have known several who would as willingly have had their Children and Relations not baptized at all, as not to have the Sign of the Cross added. And this, not because it is required by Authority, but because (as they have professedly and openly owned) they thought the Baptism not good and valid without it. Nay I have known when many Arguments would not satisfy people, that private Baptism without the Cross (and I know not how any man can justify the use of the Cross in that case) was sound and true Baptism, tho they have professed they did believe the Child could not live half an hour. And in such cases the Sign of the Cross is I think at least *Contradictio in Adjecto*. And some of these were such I should scarce have believed had been so ignorant or superstitious, if I had not had a particular knowledge of it.

And however both these Effects might happen directly contrary to the primary design in appointing them, yet when these Fruits do apparently spring from thence, whether naturally or  
only



only by accident, they may be enough to make those who have the greatest zeal for the power of godliness, desire that no more stress may be laid on these things, than their own Nature will bear.

For notwithstanding all the caution the Church hath used to prevent these ill Effects, by declaring her own design, and the true use and importance of these things, that has not been universally effectual to answer her Design. Neither her Rubrics, her Canons, no nor the Admonitions of her Clergy, have been so effectual to prevent mistakes and false conceptions about these things, as the constant, uninterrupted, and enjoined use and practice of them, has been to ingender and create them in some mens minds. Nor is it altogether improbable, but more minds would have been leavened with such false Notions, as those mentioned before, if these things had been universally submitted to, and the contests and differences about them had not awakened people to consider them more distinctly, and get themselves acquainted with the proper design and true use of them.

Nor have I only observed, that some do misunderstand the Church in injoyning the use of these Ceremonies, by the particular knowledge I have had of their laying too much stress on these things, and looking on them as assential parts of Ordinances, but I am inclined to think that many others are sensible what kind of thoughts some pretenders to our Church have of these things. And this from the Reasons some active men gave, why they would not yield to any alteration, when that admirable Project of uniting us was on foot, and was managed by those eminent and glorious Members of this Church, Lord Keeper *Bridgeman*, Sir *Matthew Hale*, and Dr. *Wilkins*, afterwards Bishop of *Chester*. One reason why some zealous Clergymen would not yield was, because, "many such Concessions might also shake those of our own Communion, and tempt them to forsake us, and go over to the Church of *Rome*, pretending that we changed so often, that they were thereby inclined to be of a Church that was constant and true to her self.

I am for my own part well enough satisfied of the lawfulness of the several things required, but I see not any reason why

*Life of Sir  
Math. Hale.  
P. 43.*

why I should be angry with others, because the same Arguments which do Convince me, have not the same influence on them. There are several Arguments made use of to commend Conformity in these things, and to prove the lawfulness of them, as now in use; but they have not all that force and power on me, that some of them have. And it may be those Arguments which sway most with me, are not so prevalent with others as some of the rest, which I cannot discern to be so concluding. Now as it would be very absurd and ridiculous, if I and another, who are full Conformists, should quarrel, because we are not equally affected with the same Arguments; so it would be very unreasonable, according to that measure of light I enjoy, if I should be testy with, and fierce against another, because he is not convinced in this unnecessary point by any of the Arguments I can alledge for it.

The Church has said a great deal to signify her own sense of these things, and to acquaint the world how innocent her design is in the use of them; but seeing this declaration has not been of force to open some mens eyes, or to remove their scruples, 'tis certain the removing some of the things themselves which are most insisted on, and scrupled by Dissenters, would more effectually convince them (if Authority should see fit to try that Expedient) how Indifferent she doth esteem them. This brings to my Remembrance that Apologue *Beza* made use of, after *Grindal* had acquainted him with the import of the Rubrick which was designed to prevent those ill Consequences *Beza* did suspect. The Apologue was very much to this purpose, A certain Nobleman having finished his House, did suffer a very great stone he had no occasion for to lie before the house, at this stone People did very often stumble, when they walked that way in the dark, which occasioned some Complaints; the Nobleman would not suffer it to be taken away, but ordered a Lanthorn should be hung over it. This not effectually securing People from the inconveniences which happened by its lying there, the Nobleman was at last intreated to remove both the stone and the Lanthorn, by doing of which he would both ease himself of much Trouble, and do the People good Service.

Having said thus much in general, by way of Plea for Moderation

deration towards some who do dissent from the Church of England, I will add something more particularly, being as it were loudly and earnestly called to it, both by the Dorsetshires Grand Jury's presenting, at the last Assizes holden at Sherburne, my Sermon against Persecution, and by the noise and stir some who would be thought Great Men do make about that Sermon; in which I have said but little in Comparison of what may truly be said for some Dissenters. For there I have only accidentally fallen on that point, and have engaged no further, than to warn some hasty and inconsiderate people, that they do not rashly and furiously engage in Prosecuting their Quiet, Religious, Honest and Peaceable Neighbours, lest by ruining them on the account of some Differences they do not rightly understand, they should at last be found guilty of such a Sin, as cannot be expiated by the little, sleight, and frivolous pretences they are at present inclined to urge for their own Vindication.

What I will further say in this matter, I intend to bring under these heads.

1<sup>st</sup>. I will say something of the matter in dispute between us and the Dissenters. 2<sup>ly</sup>, I will give both a general and particular account of the people I plead for. 3<sup>ly</sup>, I will very briefly answer those Objections I understand are ordinarily in these parts raised against my Sermon. And here I shall have occasion to shew, that the exercise of that Moderation I plead for, will very well comport with True Conformity.

1<sup>st</sup>. I will say something of the matter in dispute betwixt us and the Dissenters. I do not doubt but there are some who do except against the Form of our Church Government, pleading a *Jus Divinum* for some other. But I do not intend to meddle much in this Controversie; for I never yet found any Argument pleaded by the several Pretenders that way, that could fully satisfy and convince me of the *Jus Divinum* of any one particular Form of Church Government. Very Learned and Pious men do disagree in this point, yea they apply some of the best Arguments they can jointly agree in for the evidencing of what they assert, with great strength, to their own different ways. Nay the Learned<sup>st</sup> who have appeared for the *Jus Divinum* of Episcopacy, have in their agreeing



ing on this Notion, suspected each others Arguments, and have therefore found out different Hypotheses on which they would superstruct this common Notion, and prove it undeniably to the world. And indeed the ways they have taken to clear and confirm this Notion, are some of them directly destructive of others.

*Vid. Hieron.  
Comment. in E-  
pist. ad Titum,  
v. 5.*

*Vindication of  
the Primitive  
Churches.*

*Epist. 85.  
ad Evag.*

*Pref. to his Rights  
of Princes.*

*A Notion, the lear-  
ned and studious Mr.  
Dodwell, has taken  
a great deal of pains  
about, in his Trea-  
tise of Schism.*

Saint *Hieron's* Account of the Original of Episco-  
pacy, does in the Judgment of very learned men  
carry a great deal of probability with it. And the  
Learned Dr. *Hammond* has scarce given a full, abso-  
lute and satisfactory Answer to all that *Blondel* offers  
in vindication of that Notion. No nor does Mr.  
*Maurice's* reflecting on some little instances in St  
*Hieron*, to invalidate his Notion, render it so ri-  
diculous and uncooth, as he seems to fancy.

But allowing Dr *Hammonds* notion, it quite throws the Priesthood  
out of doors, and makes the middle Order a meer Humane In-  
vention, and so degrades the Priests more than those  
did, who occasioned St *Hieron's* advancing them (as  
some think) too high, and making them to differ  
very little from Bishops. The truly eminent Dr. *Burnet*, who is  
equally famous for his Universal Learning, as for his excellent  
and extraordinary Historick Talent, and who above most Wri-  
ters, is solid and victorious in his Reasonings, does in my appre-  
hension offer the most plausible account for the  
*Jus Divinum* of Episcopacy. But I think I shall  
scarce ever be made an absolute Profelyte to  
that Doctrine, till I see a more clear, full, and distinct Answer  
to Dr. *Stillingfleets* most Rational and Elaborate *Irenicum*, than  
any yet extant. And the naming of this last Book will be enough  
to manifest that an owning of the *Jus Divinum* of Episcopacy is  
not necessary to Conformity.

Some who insist very much on this *Jus Di-  
vinum* run their Notion a great deal too far;  
and their keeping such a stir as they do a-  
bout Succession (whereas I cannot find that any  
of the first Fathers did insist on any other  
Succession, than a Succession in Faith) will sug-  
gest to some men, unrecoverable doubts con-  
cerning

cerning all our Ministry, and the validity of all our Administrations.

There has been a great dispute concerning the possibility of personal assurance of Salvation. This Doctrine of Succession will go a great way to determine the Question in the Negative. And indeed it offers too great occasion (if we allow the Notion) to question the validity of most Ministrations in the world. For, supposing that some were anciently made Bishops by Presbyters, as the most learned Arch-Bishop *Usher* durst have undertook to have proved, and for a belief of which, we have a great deal of ground from what St. *Hierom* saith of the Bishops at *Alexandria*. For these not receiving their power in a Regular way, *viz.* not from those who had Authority and Commission to Communicate and give it, all the Ordinations they did afterwards Celebrate, will prove null (according to this Principle); and of how vast and wide an extent this might be, or how long a time this spurious Communication of Orders did continue, is too difficult a point for the most curious and exact Critick to resolve. Nay, for ought any one can tell, some of the Ordinations, which now go for currant, might appear, if they could be run up to those Ages, to derive from some of those impotent and unauthorized Bishops.

*Epist. ad Evagrium.*

'Tis a very hard task for people to undertake to prove to themselves, the Administrations they partake of are valid, by proving the valid Ordination of him who Ministers. For, it is not enough that one who is called a Bishop, and was consecrated according to the Rules of a particular Church, did ordain him who officiates, but you must prove that that Bishop's Ordainers, and so upwards, till you come to them who were ordained by the Apostles, had every one of them a True; Regular, Episcopal Ordination. And it will be a very unsafe, tho it may appear to be an easie way, to perswade people to be satisfied with a belief that the Providence of God is obliged to maintain this Succession unblemisht in the world. For he may do that, and yet the greatest part of those Ordinations, which are called Episcopal, be notwithstanding *Invalid*, because of some *Mixture*, either further distant, or nearer at hand.

But tho this Notion obtains very much in these days, our great Church-men, and those who were high enough for Episcopacy

formerly, had other thoughts, and abhorred to strain their Opinions to countenance such Uncharitableness, as this Notion doth include. " For, when some were to be ordained Bishops for Scotland, *An. Dom. 1609.* Dr. *A. B. Spotf-wood's History.* " *Andrews*, then Bishop of *Ely*, proposed a Question concerning the Consecration of those Bishops, Whether they must not first be Ordained Presbyters, because they had not received Ordination from a Bishop? But Dr. *Bancroft*, Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, maintain'd there was no need of it; for the Ordination given by Presbyters, when Bishops could not be had, must be owned lawful. And then the Bishop of *Ely* did acquiesce, the other Bishops being of that Judgment.

That which I design to take notice of, as the matter in dispute between us and the Dissenters, is the Ceremonies we use, and they do scruple. And I must needs say, I apprehend it a very great unhappiness that such Divisions should be amongst us, and continue so long, whilst occasioned by such things as are but trifling and frivolous, when compared with the great things in which we agree.

Tho I plead for Moderation towards those who cannot come up to us in these things, and that busie intemperate People, who lye under no obligation to interpose and make themselves Accessary to the causing of Fines and Mulcts, or heavier Censures, to be inflicted on their sober, honest, pious, but scrupulous Neighbours, may not have any encouragement in their doing thus, but may meet with those Checks and Reprimands as shall prove effectual to restrain them from that course; yet I do heartily wish all could be fairly satisfied concerning the lawfulness of the several things which are now appointed. But I think much may be said by Them who are satisfied concerning these things, to shew the great reasonableness of compassion and tenderness towards them who do at present dissent.

Besides, I perceive that by the serious and diligent use of those methods which are universally acknowledged most agreeable with a Christian Church and Ministry, many of those for whom I plead may be prevailed with to a considerable Compliance in a little time. For I have known several, who have been wholly profelyted to our Church, by the practical Sermons, exem-



exemplary Lives, and the rational serious Discourses of some of our Clergy, and by the calm and meek Endeavours they have used to satisfy their Judgments, and remove their Scruples. And I do not doubt, but if these and the like courses were every where duly observed and encouraged, it would evidently appear there is not the thousandth part of that need to use more severe Methods, which some apprehend there is.

But it is a great unhappiness, we have so many who pretend to the Church of *England*, who are her greatest disgrace, and who will not allow we make any Profelytes to the Church, unless we do prevail with them to sit ordinarily ten times as long in a Tavern or Alehouse, as the longest Service appointed for any day in the year, and a Sermon of near an hour long at the end of it, will oblige them to stay at Church. It would undoubtedly be a great honour to our Church, if all who pretend to her, would lay out the chief of their zeal for Real Religion, and then labour to win on, and profelyte those who do dissent in these lesser things, by condescending and yielding what they may, and treating them with meekness and love. "The very appearances of a calm temper have a Charm in them, but the Effects of them in concurrence with other prudent Methods, are most irresistible. In sum, it is better to be over-run and ruined in the ways of meekness, than to conquer all the world by cruelty. In the one we bear the Cross, and suffer for Righteousness sake; in the other we Triumph in the Garments of Antichrist, died red with the blood of those, who, tho in Errors, yet may be good Men in the main, for ought we know. Thus *Exhortation to Peace and Union. p. 16.* speaks the learned Dr. *Burnet*, who in all his Writings discovers an eminently primitive, Christian, healing Spirit.

I might mention many things, now I am taking notice of the great Matter in dispute between us, which may incline sober and pious minds to dislike all unnecessary heat and Severity towards those who are not able to attain to so great a Latitude in Relation to these things, as we are satisfied with. But I will neither multiply instances to an irksome number, nor insist on those I shall name, so as to make them tedious.

dious. I will name but seven things, and they are such as will conduce something to abate that violent and unaccountable Peevishness some have allowed themselves in, if considered with that candor and equanimity which becomes every Christian, and every man who would judge fairly of things.

1<sup>st</sup>. It is unquestionably certain, that the closer any Church doth keep, or the nearer she approach to the first Churches, in their simplicity and freedom from Humane Inventions, the more justifiable she will be. She will be the freer from those Contagions which are too apt to prevail when way is given to every thing that either a subtle man can represent as plausible, or a pious affectionate man may apprehend useful.

I do not plead for reducing the Church to it's ancient and primitive Poverty, nor do I in the least incline to that opinion, that there may not be some external difference in the Church when under Prosperous Circumstances, from that she observed when persecuted and under storms. But undoubtedly, there is no absolute necessity of making new Terms of Communion, because the outward face of Affairs is altered. The less there is of Humane Inventions mixed with the Worship of God, the more genuine and the liker it is to that which the Apostles and Primitive Christians did observe. Nor do we find that outward Circumstances were very much insisted on by the Orthodox, till very Considerable Corruptions were crept into the Church. And tho this doth not argue or conclude against the lawfulness of any thing the Church of *England* doth injoin (for I do not urge it for that end) yet it may induce us to have much Charity and Tenderneſs for them, who have such a regard to what was only observed and enjoined in the first Churches, they are almost afraid to deviate from them, even in such particulars as are innocent and free.

The first Churches were so taken up with the great, necessary, and substantial Parts of Religion, they had no time to fall out and quarrel about Indifferent, Circumstantial Appendages. Indeed we do not read of any contendings about these things till some, either very ill, or very weak men, had a mind to lay an unnecessary and uneasy yoke on the rest of their Brethren.

There ought to be a great deal of care taken, when ever  
any

any unnecessary Instances are admitted so much as to border on the Worship of God. For God is very jealous of his Honour, and we can scarce be too wary in giving way to Humane Inventions in Divine Service, because our minds are too prone to adhere over-much to what is sensible. Nay, we too easily give more way and room to those particulars which are at first commended under very specious, colourable, and innocent pretences, than we can afterwards justify to be lawful. However, this is apt to lay us too open to the treacherous insinuations with which cunning and subtle men will labour to commend to us other Instances which be directly sinful. But we must take heed not only that we yield not in things really evil, but that we do not transgress due bounds in the use of those things which are Harmless.

A very ill use has been made of many things which were without doubt Originally well intended; yea, those very particulars which devout and Holy Men have found serviceable to them in the raising of their affections to the best things, have been of ill Consequence when peremptorily enjoined on all.

There ought not any thing to be universally required of all men in the Service of God, but what has either equal agreeableness to all mens tempers, or a direct and certain tendency to advance the interest of Religion more or less in all men. For, some Instances which are proper to excite and quicken Devotion in some mens breasts, have not the like tendency in reference unto others; And the goodness of the End will not justify an Universal Imposition, till you can first of all make all men of one Complexion.

2<sup>ly</sup>. Teaching that Humane Authority has an unlimited Power to impose any thing on the Church which is not expressly forbid in Scripture, may be of dangerous consequence. It is generally acknowledged (I think) by most Parties, that it doth pertain to Humane Authority to determine those Circumstances relating to the Worship of God, which do belong to those Acts, considered as they are Humane Acts. Some Circumstances

*Our present Sovereign doth in his Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs take notice, that some Ceremonies may even lessen that Piety and Devotion, for the improvement whereof they might happily be first introduced, and consequently may well be dispensed with. p. 4.*



cumstances must unavoidably accompany every external Religious Performance, because it is impossible for man to act, and his Acts be stript of all Circumstances; and therefore it is generally allowed, that those Circumstances without which the joint Celebration of Divine Ordinances cannot be observed, should be determined by Humane Authority. As to other Ceremonies, which are not necessary to these Performances, some do apprehend they are left free by Christ, and therefore should not be constrained and compelled by men.

There have been great Disputes in the Church about this matter. And some have declared their sense in very large words, even so as to make way for the bringing of very strange Innovations into the Church. For,

1<sup>st</sup>. It is not Demonstrably certain, that Humane Authority has power any further, than to restrain and punish disorders, and indecencies in the Church. And if so, tho we our selves may be satisfied to serve God in the way appointed by Authority, we cannot thence fairly conclude it lawful to ruine others who serve God without our Ceremonies, but in a way that is grave and decent as well as ours. For, if it should at last happen, notwithstanding all the Probabilities we have on our side, that the extent of Humane Authority in these matters, is only to keep men within Decent and Comly bounds, and to punish them when they are disorderly, irreverent, and Rude; and that it doth not reach to determine one way Decent and Orderly, so as to make all other wayes, (which are in themselves equally Decent) unlawful; I say, if it should thus fall out at last, then all those who do unnecessarily engage themselves in the immoderate courses I am disswading from, may wish, when it is too late, they had followed the safest Advice.

2<sup>ly</sup>. The Limitations usually prescribed to the Exercise of this Power, by those who yield it in a great measure, are such as will not secure us from all the dangerous Inconveniences which do attend this Power when unlimited. Indeed, if Humane Authority has such a Power belonging to it of Right, as some do affirm, there cannot be very much said on the point. And therefore I will only propose two Questions for such to think upon.

*Quest*

*Quest.* 1. Who has power to circumscribe and restrain it within the bounds they do sometimes prefix?

*Quest.* 2. How shall we be secured, when under the conduct and government of either a Popish, or very superstitious Prince, from having all those Popish Ceremonies enjoined which were in force in the latter part of King *Henry* the 8<sup>th</sup>s Reign? If the Publick and Governing Judgment and Conscience must be undeniably the Rule and Standard in these things for all the Governed, I cannot discern how we can be excused from an obligation to observe all those Rites and Ceremonies that were then appointed, if we be ever so unhappy as to be cast under the influence of a Prince who can be prevailed with to be superstitious enough to think those Ceremonies not too many, and that they are Ancient, and Expedient; especially if he do declare them to be required, as that King did, not as parts of Worship, but for a more Honourary, and Decorous Performance of it\*.

\**Vid.* Dr Burnet's *Hist. of the Reformation*, Vol. 1<sup>st</sup>. Addend. numb. 1<sup>st</sup>. Of Rites and Ceremonies. p. 313.

3<sup>ly</sup>. The things we contend about, are of such a Nature, they cannot bear so much weight as some would lay upon them. There have been in most Ages a sort of Pretenders to Religion, who, like *Aesop's Dog*, have parted with the substance for an empty shadow; only in this they appear worse, because he catching at both, lost what he had, they willingly part with the substance, and aim at no more than an outward shew. It was thus in our Saviours time. The Scribes and Pharisees, yea the Priests and High-priests, the Ruling Clergy in those days, did suffer, nay teach men to break Divine Laws, if they would appear zealous for their Doctrines and Superstitions. For ought I can perceive, men might then commute for as many sins, by crying, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, as some hope to do now by crying, *O the Church, the Church*.

These things are at best but meer accidental and separable Appendages. They may (if Authority see fit) be removed, and Religion remain as entire and pure as it is with them. And therefore for a man to be as zealous about these, as if Religion It self did lye at stake, is every jot as absurd and foolish, as if a man should pay the very same respect and veneration

neration to a Princes meanest Servant, which he and all other men acknowledge due only to the Prince himself. But when men can no more trample Religion under foot, neither regard its Doctrines, nor live agreeably to its Precepts, and yet will be peevish and fierce against all who are not as Ceremonious as themselves; when they will ordinarily swear, and be drunk, and commit all sorts of wickedness with greediness, and yet express an Extraordinary Zeal for these Circumstantials; this is to imitate him, who when he has cut his Sovereigns throat, does bow, and cringe, and appears extraordinarily respectful to his Page or Footboy. How unseemly a thing is it, to hear a drunken swearing Debauchee, declaiming against Dissenters, and crying out, *The Church, The Church?* 'Tis much more fit the Censures of the Church should be inflicted on such men, to the throwing of them out of her Communion, till they obtain more Grace, and learn more Modesty, than that they should patronize and defend their Lusts by such a Plea.

These things are not matters of such Moment, that Moderate and Pious men should lay forth much of their Zeal about them. Men on both sides may go to Heaven, and when they are there, they will not quarrel about such things; why then should those things create such Distances at present? Nay sufferings and the sight of Death can reconcile and unite their Hearts and Affections, who may at present be unduly Hot either way. *Ridley* and *Hooper* were perfectly reconciled, notwithstanding their former Differences about such matters as these, when they were both to suffer for the Protestant Religion; yea *Ridley*, who was on the Conforming side, does now write to *Hooper*, who had scrupled some things, That now he was entirely united to him, tho in some Circumstances of Religion they had formerly jarred a little. And he adds, it was *Hooper's wisdom*, and *his own simplicity*, that divided them, every one following the Abundance of his own sense. But now he assured him, that in the bowels of Christ, he loved him in the truth and for the truth. Dr. *Burnet's Reflection* on this is very useful. "It had been happy (says he) if the fires that consumed those good men, had put an end to these Contests,

*History of the Reformation, part. 2d. P. 304.*



“ tests, and if those who have been since engaged in the like,  
 “ will reflect more on the sense they had of them, when they  
 “ were now preparing for Eternity, than on the Heats they  
 “ were put in concerning them, when perhaps ease and plen-  
 “ ty made their Passions keener, they may from thence be re-  
 “ duced to have more moderate thoughts of such matters.

Those who are so stiff in *This Day*, and do industriously prosecute to the utmost those Brethren who are of the same Religion they pretend to, and do differ only in these lesser unnecessary Points, yea dare declaim against, and rail at them, who were so much of late for effecting a true Reconciliation, and a lasting Union amongst us, in a *Legal Way*, are certainly very far from approving themselves True Sons of the Church of *England*. For Parliaments, whose Authority alone has given a Sanction to these things, are most fit to take into their Consideration whether it be convenient to make any Alteration or not; unless men will have them to be unalterable. And if any think them so, they may learn from the *Church of England* her self, how much they have Apostatized from her, and what dirt they endeavour to fling in her Face. For she saith expressly, *They may be altered.* And no meaner a Conformist than Mr. *Thorndike*, doth say, *The Form of Service now in force by Law may be acknowledged capable of Amendment, without disparagement either to the wisdom of the Church that prescribed it, or of the Nation that enacted it.*

*Of Ceremonies before  
the Common Prayer.*

*Due way of Compos-  
ing Differences.*

Mens laying too much stress on these things, and treating others too rigorously for not believing or practising in these matters as they like best, has occasioned more mischief than I can easily describe. What Mr. *Burges* said concerning Ceremonies, in his Sermon before King *James*, was very true and moderate. viz. “ They are like the *Roman* Senators Glasses,  
 “ which were not worth a mans Life or Livelyhood: For  
 “ (saith he) This Senator invited *Augu-*  
 “ *stus Caesar* to a Dinner, and as he was com-  
 “ ing to the Feast he heard a horrid Outcry,  
 “ and saw some company drawing a Man  
 “ after them that made that noise. The Emperour demanding

*Wilson's History of  
Great Britain, p. 11.*

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“ the

„ the cause of that violence ; it was answered, their Master had  
 „ condemned him to the Fish-Ponds, for breaking a Glas  
 “ which he set a high value and esteem upon. *Cesar* com-  
 “ manded a stay of the Execution, and when he came to the  
 “ house, he asked the *Senator* whether he had Glasses worth a  
 “ mans life ? who answered (being a great lover of such things)  
 “ that he had Glasses he valued at the price of a Province. Let  
 “ me see them (saith *Augustus*). The *Senator* then brought him  
 “ to a Room very well furnished : The *Emperor* saw them beauti-  
 “ ful to the eye, but knew withall they might be the cause  
 “ of much mischief, therefore he brake them all, with this Ex-  
 “ pression, *Better all these perish than one Man*. My Author saith  
 he left it to his Majesty to apply, and so do I to the Reader.

Did those we call Dissenters refuse to yield as ready and  
 free a submission and obedience to any of the Laws we look  
 on as purely Civil, as any amongst our selves, I do not know  
 any man that would plead for them, tho they  
 were prosecuted with great severity. But if  
 their Consciences are so strait they cannot yield  
 in these other instances relating to Religion,  
 it will be generally allowed they are not to be  
 blamed whilst their Consciences are so af-  
 fected \*. And to say peremptorily it is not Con-  
 science, but Humour and Fancy, is not only  
 placing your selues in God's Throne, and ta-  
 king too much upon you, but it is every jot,  
 as uncharitable, as some mens proceedings  
 are severe. Especially considering they are  
 made of flesh and blood, as well as we Con-  
 formists be ; and they know (it may be bet-  
 ter than we do, even by Experience) what the  
 difference is betwixt a warm house, and a cold

\* I do not say it is  
 superstition for any  
 man to abstain from  
 doing what he appre-  
 hends to be unlaw-  
 ful by virtue of a  
 general command, for  
 this is a Moral Duty,  
 and obedience to those  
 places of Scripture  
 which bid us abstain  
 from all kinds and  
 appearances of evil.  
 Dr. Stillingfleet's  
 Sermon of the Nature  
 of Superstition. p.37.

and nasty Prison, betwixt the Poverty and other Inconveni-  
 ences under which many of them suffer, and the comfortable  
 Enjoyments many of us do share in. Thousands of pounds,  
 and hundreds by the year, would be money to them, as well  
 as to any of us. And if it be not Conscience that makes  
 them deny themselves, as to these things, but it must still pass  
 for Fancy and Humour, 'tis such a Humour (I believe) most  
 of

of those who are fiercest against them, are very little acquainted with.

That Passage of St. *Austin* deserves to be particularly considered, and often thought on, where he tells us it is a very unworthy and unbecoming thing, to condemn and judge one another for such things as will not render us of greater or of less value with God. *Indignum est ut propter ea quæ nos Deo neque Digniores, neque indigniores possunt facere, alii alios vel condemnemus vel judicemus.*

4ly. I never yet met with any Argument (especially that I can at present call to mind) for the absolute enforcing of some particular needless Ceremonies to be observed in the Church by all who live under one Civil Government, but what would be of the same force if it were applied to all the Churches in the world. There is as much Reason (I think) that every Church, and every *Congregation* for the Service of God, throughout the world, should observe the same Ceremonies (if we only respect the Observations and Reflections Heathens, Strangers, and Enemies to our holy Faith will make, when they see that in one and the same Nation People professing the same Religion do observe Different Rites) as that all the Congregations in one Nation should: Because the Enemies of Christianity have the same ground to make the very same Reflections on our Religion, when they observe that those who profess the same Religion, and own the same Faith, and use the very same Ordinances in different Nations, have such a Disagreement amongst themselves, they cannot consent together in the use of the same Rites. For the Reason of their Reflection in this case, is grounded on the Unity of their Faith and Religion. And it is universally acknowledged they make up but one Church, in how many Kingdoms and Nations so ever they be.

Now what *peculiar Reason* can be given, on the account of Religion, why it is more unseemly, and will give greater occasion of offence, for several Congregations, which are but parts of one and the same *Particular Church*, or for several *Particular Churches*, which are but parts of the *National Church*, to observe and use different *Ceremonies*, than for several *National Churches*, which art but Parts of the one *Universal Church*, to do so.



And seeing the Notion of Catholick Communion is particularly insisted on at this time, and urged with some earnestness, some solid and weighty Reason, (such as may satisfy inquisitive Men) should be given, why *Catholick Communion* should not have *Catholick Terms*. But I cannot perceive any such, in

*Discourse about  
Church-Unity, &c.*

the Writings of Dr. *Sherlock*, the great manager of this Argument, tho' he doth assert, that all *Christians* are bound to joyn in Communion with that part of the *Church* where the Providence of God doth place them.

5ly. Long and often Experience hath made it undeniably evident, that the putting of *Penal Laws* rigorously in execution against humble, modest, conscientious Dissenters, (and I plead only for such) hath not answered the Design and End for which they were intended. And therefore it may be more excuseable, if those who were formerly very warm for the Prosecution of Dissenters, do now after so many years experience begin to be more moderate, and desire that a more amicable Expedient may be found out to compose our Differences; severity is not a proper method for the satisfying of mens Judgments, or the removing of their Scruples. And tho' the using of such courses, may hinder people from assembling so publickly as they desire, nay may make some comply in opposition to their own Judgements, yet it never made any real Profelytes; it has rather prepared the minds of others to have a greater compassion towards, and liking of them. And therefore when ever by accident, necessity, or of choice the Reins have been let loose, and they have found any Indulgence, those very persons, who according to some Mens thoughts were reclaimed, have fallen off, and multitudes of others have discovered an unwonted inclination towards them. This is evident in all the Instances Historians do relate, and particularly in all those a late Author hath taken notice of, with

*Remarks on the  
Growth & Progress of  
Nonconformity. Some  
are great Admirers  
of that Book. But I  
must affirm, and so*

a design to urge and promote the severe and rigid prosecuting of all Dissenters without any Difference. Severity has conducted as much as any thing to the growth and spreading of Nonconformity, as all those Instances do demonstrate. For the more any tolerable

nable party is afflicted and frown'd upon, the more is that party admired and owned, if such occurrences do happen, that any favour and kindness must be shewed unto it.

And the true Reason why the Nonconformists did multiply so numerously when the Publick state of affairs did require them to be indulged, was not because they were then tolerated, but because they had been before treated with obvious roughness and severity, and under that usage had demeaned themselves with a very becoming and graceful exemplary carriage. If you will absolutely vanquish and root out Nonconformity by severe methods, there are two things at least which you must have a peculiar regard to, and be able to effect.

*will every Intelligent & unprejudiced Reader, that the Author has neither discovered that candor and ingenuity in the manner of his writing, nor that evidence of truth and faithfulness in his Historical Relations, nor that strength and clearness of Reason and Logick in his Arguings, which might justly be expected from one who would attempt to treat on such a subject.*

1<sup>st</sup>. You must lay an invincible check and restraint upon Gods Providence, so that he may not suffer any publick occurrence to intervene, which will make it Necessary to tolerate and indulge those who do Dissent, till you have effectually subdued them all, and absolutely destroy'd both Root and Branch. For if there should be a Publick Necessity to indulge them, after they have been vigorously prosecuted for a time, their numbers will undoubtedly be much greater than they were before. And there is scarce an instance to be given of Moderate Dissenters being prosecuted with great warmth and unnecessary Heat, but, in a little time after, there has been some or other very notable Emergency which has rendred it very necessary to have them entertained with great Clemency and Gentleness.

2. If you destroy them all, with an indifferent, undistinguishing hand, you must keep a strict and constant watch over them after they are dead, lest a greater Generation of the like sort do arise and spring out of their blood and ashes. Nay, you must be able to stop and stifle the Cry of their blood, lest otherwise the Nation being so thoroughly drench'd with it, the clamorous noise of that blood coming into Gods ears, do provoke him to pour out such dreadful

ful Vials on us, as will make us at once to cease being a Church or People.

It is an excellent, true, and very useful Observation which Bishop *Taylor* made concerning Force and Extremity in matters of Religion. *viz.* When Religion puts on Armour, and God is not acknowledged by his New Testament Titles, Religion may have in it the Power of the Sword, but not the Power of Godliness, and we may complain of this to God, and amongst them who are afflicted, but we have no remedy but what we must expect from the fellowship of Christs sufferings, and the returns of the God of Peace.

6ly. It was never known that any Indifferent Ceremonies were universally imposed in a knowing Age, and the Judgments and Opinions of all good men did consent and agree to them. Indeed I think there never was such an attempt made, till Popery had got a great influence over the Christian world. I am perswaded there never was an universal compliance in Imposed Indifferences, till Popery had involved people in a more than *Egyptian* and almost inextricable Darkness.

Some do think it would be as commendable to oblige all men to have the same Face, as to have in every respect the same judgment. Indeed men would have just ground to wonder, if a Law should be made, requiring all men to be of one *Bulke*, and *Stature*, and forbidding them to eat and drink (at least in Company) if they fail to observe it. But I am sure I have some where read of a certain Expedient that was sometimes made use of to make Dwarfs, and breed them to be all of one Bigness. It was not any such Stratagem as *Procrustes* used to make his Friends and Visitants of one length, *viz.* Cutting off their Heads if they were too long, and racking them ought of joynt if they were too short. This looks like the persecuting way made use of in some Forreign parts of the World, when mens Judgments and Consciences do not answer the *Politick Standard*. The way I speak of, differs very much from this. For it will let People grow till they be of a just size, and then stops them that they shall not increase one jot. 'Tis coupling them up at first, and then Dieting them proportionably, and never suffering them to stir out of their first



first enclosure, till they have not only stuf't it quite up, but are quite past growing.

If you would have all men of the same mind in every thing relating to the Service and Worship of God, and what men call so, the most effectual Expedient will be to involve them in the same Gross Ignorance in which their Ancestors were held under the *Romish* yoke. There is no way so likely to make men to entertain anything without Scruple, as keeping them in so much darkness they cannot see, or making them so dull they cannot examine things. People are never brought to a servile submission to all kind of Impositions, till they have for some time been inured to an Implicite Faith, and then you may obtrude on them what you please.

7<sup>th</sup>. Very great and considerable Alterations have been made in our Rubricks, our publick Service, and our Articles, in order to the bringing of the Papists to join with us in our Worship, and to prevent our giving them so much as the colour of a pretence for their withdrawing from our Communion. And if so much might be parted with to gratifie our worst and most implacable Enemies, even them who differ from us in the very Substantials of Religion, is it not highly Reasonable we should express some Moderation and Tenderneſſy towards them, who are in every thing of the same Religion with us, and do only differ about some unnecessary Ceremonies?

But there are too many who pretend to this Church, who discover they are of the mind that we cannot manifest too much Complacency in those who are avowedly of the Popish Perswasion, nor appear inexorable enough towards our afflicted fellow Protestants. How many are there who pretend to be Sons of the *Church of England*, and yet dare openly declare they have a greater aversion to Protestant Dissenters than Popish Recusants? What *hopeful Church of England men* will these be, if the Sins of this Nation should rise so high as to Provoke God to pour on us the Vials of his displeasure, and to imbitter, nay poison them all, by adding the greatest of all other Plagues, making us subject to a Popish Governor?

Dr. *Heylin* tells us there was great care taken for expunging all such Passages in the *Hist. Reform. p. 111.*

Book of Common Prayer, &c. as might give any scandal or offence to the Popish Party, or be urged by them in excuse for their not coming to Church, &c. In the Litany that most excellent passage was expunged, where we pray to be delivered from the Tyranny and all the detestable Enormities of the Bishops of *Rome*. In the Communion-Service a whole Rubrick against the Popish Doctrine of the Sacrament was expunged.

Dr. Burnet's Hist.  
*Reform.* part 2. p.  
405.

And in the Original Copy of the 39 Articles there is a very considerable Addition to the 28th Article, which doth expressly declare that no Christian ought either to believe or profess the Real and Corporal Presence of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, giving a very strong and invincible Reason for it. But because some alledged that such an express Definition against a Real Presence might drive from the Church many who were still of that Perswasion, &c. therefore those words were by common consent left out.

Is it not a very strange and unreasonable thing that some great Pretenders to the *Church of England*, should think it Lawful, and consistent with their pertaining to that Church, to be familiar, and converse ordinarily with, nay Feast, and it may be revel and be drunk with professed Papists, and yet rail at, and declaim against others who are much truer Conformists than themselves, because they dare visit, and have sober and neighbourly Communication with Pious, Honest, Sober, Peaceable Protestant Dissenters?

I offer these things to peoples consideration, not to except against the Lawfulness of any thing the *Church of England* doth injoyn and practise, but only to mind some who do unnecessarily ingage in the prosecuting of their Honest Peaceable Neighbours, that there are several things which have some weight in them to oblige us to forbear all unnecessary severity towards people who are not yet in every thing of our Judgments.

But some will be ready to say, What do you plead for all sorts of Dissenters, or only some particular Sects? And if so, Why do you not name the Sects you plead for? I answer, I am against all Sects, Parties, and Divisions in the Church, and I look on all the *Factions Reproachful Names* people professing themselves

themselves Christians are listed under, as pernicious *Devices* of the Devil to help forward *Division*, and to molest and injure that *Common Christianity* we do all pretend to. I am sorry any who profess themselves Christians do lay so much stress on any thing in which Christianity is not immediately concerned, as to give occasion for people to coin any other Name, by which they may be distinguished from others, than that by which the Disciples and Believers were first called at *Anti-och*. I do not consider people by the Names of Reproach Atheists and Profane men do set on them, but by what I do really find them in their open profession and general practice. But that you may know more distinctly who they be I plead for, I will now say something to the second point I proposed. Which is,

2<sup>ly</sup>. To give both a general and particular account of the people for whom I plead. And in general, I plead for all who deserve the Character I gave in the Preface to my Sermon against Persecution, of many Dissenters with whom I had particular acquaintance. I believe there are many of the same Stamp and Merit amongst them, with whom I never had any acquaintance. Let people come under what Denomination soever, if I can discern no just ground to doubt but God will accept them, I think I owe them a very great Respect and Deference; and therefore I do profess I rejoyce in the conversation of all whom I apprehend I have good cause to believe *do Fear God and work Righteousness*, and I mourn to consider how Differences are kept alive and heightened betwixt them and other Good men. We all ought to have a great tenderness for, and regard to all those who are vigorous Protestants (that is, who profess and own all the Doctrines of Christianity the Church of *England* doth, and do oppose and reject all those Tenets which are truly Popish: For it is not mens owning or renouncing some Indifferent Ceremonies, which makes them Protestants, or of the Reformed Religion) who are exemplarily pious and virtuous in their Conversations, and who live peaceably and soberly, and do not endeavour any unlawful Alteration in the Government.

I plead for Moderation towards such as were known some time since to the Kings Majesty, and all who answer that Cha-



rafter he was pleased to give of them who had attended on him in *Holland*. His words are these, "When we were in

*His Majesties Declaration to all his loving Subjects, &c. concerning Ecclesiastical Affairs, p. 3.*

"*Holland* we were attended by many Grave  
 "and Learned Ministers from hence, who  
 "were looked on as the most able and principal  
 "Assertors of the Presbyterian Opinions,  
 "with whom we had as much conference, as  
 "the multitude of Affairs which were then  
 "upon us would permit us to have, and to our great satisfaction  
 "and comfort, found them persons full of Affection to us,  
 "of Zeal for the Peace of the Church and State, and neither  
 "Enemies (as they have been given out to be) to Episcopacy or  
 "Liturgy, but modestly to desire such Alterations in either, as  
 "without shaking Foundations might best allay the present Distempers  
 "which the Indisposition of the Time, and tenderness of some  
 "mens Consciences had contracted.

Those Nonconformists do deserve a peculiar respect and kindness from our Church, who really scrupling some things, do comply with us as far as possibly they can under their present apprehensions, and do publickly declare themselves against erecting *Altare contra Altare*, nay who are particularly cautious of pressing others *not to Conform*. Indeed if all who do at present Dissent, and are capable of examining the matters in difference betwixt us, would carefully lay aside all *Partiality* and *Prejudice*, and not dare to indulge themselves in *making Parties*, or in suggesting *unnecessary Doubts* to any, but would rather comply themselves to the utmost they are able, and perswade others to joyn with us in *Divine Ordinances*, by removing and answering those *Objections* and *Scruples* which are sometimes alledged, and which they themselves are satisfied are of *no force*, I am perswaded they would do themselves great Right, the Church of God much Service, and be greatly instrumental towards the composing those Differences which have long weakened the Protestant Interest, and given too great Advantage to the Common Enemy. And such as these there are undoubtedly amongst them we call Dissenters. Nay I am perswaded the Reverend Mr. *Baxter*, (tho' by some Reproachfully and very Disingenuously called the Provincial of the Protestant Schismatics) hath by his Writings, Practice,

Practice, and Advice, prevailed with as many to be in Communion with our Church, as any one man whosoever in the Kingdom. And the very Learned Mr. Hickman has not only often declared in private his aversion to dissuade any against Conformity, but has also published in Print his dislike of Nonconformists being *over zealous in pressing others not to Conform.*

*The Nonconformists vindicated from the Abuses put on them by Mr. Durel and Mr. Scrivener, p. 182, 183.*

More particularly I plead for Moderation towards,

1<sup>st</sup>. Men of such Learning as Mr. Baxter, Mr. Hickman, &c. These and many more have given the World undeniable and very signal Evidences of their being Men of extraordinary Reading and Judgment. They are great Ornaments in their Generation, and very shining Lights in the Church of God. The *Christian* World will (no doubt) have a great veneration for them as long as it shall endure. Future Ages will honour their Memories with all the respect and intimations of high Affection sound *Christianity* will allow, when their inveterate malicious Enemies shall have their Names continued only to be used as a Proverbial Obloquy and Reproach.

2<sup>ly</sup>. Men of such Loyalty as Mr. Cooke, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Kerby, &c. These have adventured further, and suffered more for the King, than most (nay it may be any) of those who under these present favourable Circumstances do talk so much of Loyalty and Obedience. It is easie talking of these things when this is the way to Preferment. But these I have named, did Talk and Preach for them, when they were in danger of losing their Lives for doing so.

It seems very strange to me that those who could keep their Places in the Late Times of Usurpation, and on the Turn of Affairs could swallow down, and dispense with more than some of their Neighbours could, should now be thought more Loyal than those who lost their Benefices in those days, nay were imprisoned and in danger of losing their Lives too, because of their avowed adhering to the King, and cannot dispense with the same Oaths, and some other Instan-

*The same Men (saith Mr. Baxter) that then wrote against me for the changers and usurpers have since been the fierce accusers of us who opposed them. Ready way of confuting Mr. Baxter, p. 8. Vid. more in his True Hist. of Councils defended, p. 86.*

ces to redeem their Benefices, others could to keep them.

3ly. Men of such extraordinary Charity, Modesty, and other eminent Virtues as Mr. *Tho. Gouge* was, and others amongst them are. There are very many amongst them we call Dissenters, who are so eminent for the practice of the best, and in this Age the most rare

*Consider Mr. John  
How's pious Peaceable  
Epist. Dedic. before  
his Treatise of Deligh-  
ting in God.*

Virtues, it will be no disparagement for at least some *Conformists* to propose them as Patterns to themselves; and more particularly in the exercise of Moderation towards them who differ from us in Judgment even in such instances as we have a singular kind-

ness for. The Pious and Reverend Dr. *Tillotson* thinks Mr. *Tho. Gouge*, before named, worthy to be a Pattern in this to Men of all Perswasions. His Words are these: "Allowing others

*Serm. at the Fune-  
ral of M. Tho. Gouge  
p. 84.*

"to differ from him even in Opinions which were very dear  
"to him, and provided men did but fear God,  
"and work Righteousness, he loved them  
"heartily, how distant soever from him in  
"Judgment about things less Necessary. In  
"all which he is very worthy to be a Pattern  
"to men of all Perswasions whatsoever.

Now what a Crime is it for a Conformist to plead for Moderation towards such men as these? or for a Son of the Church of *England* to endeavour to give some check to the immoderate Heat and Peevishness of those furious and headstrong Bigots, who by unnecessary ingaging themselves in prosecuting their Peaceable Religious Neighbours, do endanger the weakening the Protestant Interest, and the making the Church of *England* herself a Sacrifice to the Rage, and Trophy of the Conquest of her most inveterate and indefatigable Enemies? But however innocent and justly commendable the thing is in it self, the practice of it does not appear so safe, and to have such general Countenance as it deserves. This is evident enough by the treatment the late Sermon against Persecution hath had amongst men of certain Characters.

But the World will in time be satisfied that Places and Garments do not make men better. They may yield them greater opportunities than they had before to discover what they truly are. The *Als* was an *Als* as well when he had the



the Lions skin on his back, as when it was off. Nay that Lions skin must be very large that can cover and hide the Asses ears. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? then may ye who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do good.* Jer. 13. 23.

Notwithstanding such a stir is kept about the Sermon before named, the Exceptions ordinarily alledged against it, by the very Dons themselves, are very pitiful and trifling, yet I must acknowledge they do better become them, whose faces would flatter the world into a belief they pretend to be men, than Indictments and Deprivations (which are now talked of) do.

3dly. The Objections pretended against the Sermon are chiefly these two:

1. How can I, who am a Conformist, and consequently satisfied of the Lawfulness of every thing required by the Church of *England*, be against punishing them, who will not comply with what I myself acknowledge Lawful, and do practise?

2ly. That it is very unbecoming one who receives Profits from the *Church of England* (and to use their own canting Phrase) sucks the Churches Breasts, to Apologize and plead for them who dissent from the Church.

Now any Man who hath either Eyes or any thing else in his Head, may easily perceive these Exceptions are not so much against the Sermon, as against myself. And therefore I will take the less care in answering them. For I think all such absurd and feeble Reflections are best confuted by a due contempt.

The first Objection is proposed by way of Query, and asks, How I who am a Conformist, and consequently satisfied of the Lawfulness of every thing required by the *Church of England*, can be against punishing them who will not comply with what I do acknowledge Lawful; and do practise?

*Answer.* 1st. There may other more agreeable Methods be used to make Proselytes, against which I never spake one word.

“ Solid Arguments, strong Reasons and Au-

“ thorities are more fit for confutation of an Whitlock's Memor.

“ Error, and satisfaction of Different Judg- An. 1650.

“ ments. When the Emperor took a Bishop

“ in

" in compleat Armour, he sent the Armour to the Pope with this word, *Hæcinæ sunt vestes filii tui?*

2<sup>ly</sup>. There is a great Difference betwixt a man's being satisfied of the Lawfulness of things, so as to direct his own Practice in the use of them, and his being convinced of the Necessity of them, so as to be induced thereby to justify or approve the unnecessary head-strong and furious courses, some prophane loose Fellows do take against them who are not equally satisfied with him, by the Evidence he hath. There is no reason I should pull a mans eyes out of his head, because he cannot see, what I either do see, or at least fancy I see.

3<sup>ly</sup>. The Greatest, the Wisest, and the Learnedst Men this Church was ever blessed with, have had the same thoughts that I have, and did believe the Moderation I plead for very consistent with true Conformity. *We need not* (saith his present Majesty) *profess the high affection and esteem we have for the Church of England, as it is Establish- ed by Law.--- Nor do we think that Reverence in the least Degree diminished by our Condescen- tions, not peremptorily to insist on some particulars of Ceremony, which however introduced by the Piety and Order of former times, may not be so agreeable to the present, &c.*

The Eminent Judge *Hale*, at his entring on that Employment, did oblige himself to observe this, amongst many other Excellent Rules, *viz.* " That I be not too ri- gid in Matters purely conscientious, where  
" all the Harm is Diversity of Judgment. And it is further said of him that, " Besides great  
" Charities to the Nonconformists, who were  
" then as he thought too hardly used, he took  
" great care to cover them all he could from  
" the Severities some designed against them,  
" and discouraged those who were inclined to stretch the Laws  
" too much against them.

It is very well known that Dr. *Wilkins*, late Bishop of *Chester*, was a man of as prodigious Universal Learning, and of as clear and solid a Judgment, as any man the Christian World was ever adorned with; And it is as well known that he was equally Famous for his Moderation towards Dissenters be- fore

His Majesties Decla-  
ration concerning  
Ecclesiastical Affairs,  
p. 4.

Dr. Burnet's Life of  
Sir Matthew Hale,  
p. 36.

Id. P. 39.

fore he was made Bishop, as for any of his other Extraordinary Accomplishments: And after he ascended the Episcopal Seat he continued the same man he was before, and made that Diocess (as it is very well known there, and in most other Places) the most flourishing and truly Religious part (I think I may truly say) of all Christendom, by the happy Influence under Divine Grace his eminent Moderation, Zealous Piety, and most Christian Government had in those parts. And the Eminent and Reverend Dr. *Tillotson*, in his Preface to the Reader before that Bishop's Sermons lately published, has this most remarkable Passage concerning his Moderation: "And I purposely mention his Moderation, and likewise adventure to commend him for it, notwithstanding that this virtue, so much esteemed and magnified by wise Men in all Ages, hath of late been declaimed against with so much Zeal and Fierceness, and yet with that good Grace and Confidence, as if it were not only no Virtue, but even the Sum and Abridgement of all Vices; I say, notwithstanding all this, I am still of the old Opinion, that Moderation is a Virtue, and one of the peculiar Ornaments and Advantages of the Excellent Constitution of our *Church*, and must at last be the Temper of her Members, especially the *Clergy*, if ever we seriously intend the firm establishment of this *Church*, and do not industriously design, by cherishing Heats and Divisions among our selves, to let in Popery at these Breaches.

4ly. They are generally the worst Men (especially if they be *Clergy-men*) who are most for violence in relation to those who differ about some little Indifferences. Nay, what is more, if you consider all Perswasions, you shall find they are the most Illiterate, Unsteady, Prophanes and Debauched Pretenders to any Perswasion, who are most for severity towards Modest Dissenters. Even amongst the Papists, who were so hot and furious as *Gardiner*, and *Bonner*? Men who were not only flagitious in their Lives, but had no more than an empty superficial Learning. But *Tonstall*, who was truly a Scholar, abhorred that severity towards Mens persons the others were fond of practising. "It is observable, (saith Dr. *Burnet*) that the best *Clergy-men* have been always the most gentle to those who dif-

*Hist. of the Rights of  
Princes, &c. p. 257.*



"fered from them ; for they confiding in the goodness of their  
 "Cause, and in that true merit of which every one that has  
 "it, must be conscious to himself, and yet without Pride or Va-  
 "nity, are persuaded that by the methods of love and meek-  
 "ness they shall, with the help of some time, and the use of  
 "all due prudence and caution, overcome Errors and Schisms :  
 "But the unworthy, who know that a good Cause may be  
 "spoiled, but is not likely to prevail in their hands, and who  
 "will not trouble themselves with the slow and laborious Me-  
 "thods of conquering Errors, are always apt to fly to extream  
 "and cruel courses ; since they know they must either prevail  
 "by these, or by none at all.

The second Objection saith, It is very unbecoming one who  
 receives Profits of the *Church*, to plead for them who dissent  
 from the *Church*.

I Answer, *first* of all, That there is no unseemliness at all in  
 any ones countenancing and pleading for that which all Reli-  
 gion, Equity and Reason do justifie and prompt men to.

2<sup>ly</sup>. They are extreamly stupid and dull, who cannot distin-  
 guish betwixt pleading for Peoples Dissent, and pleading that  
 they may be treated with more mildness, than some are inclin'd  
 to use. I do not plead for their Dissent, to justifie that, but do  
 only endeavour to shew that much may be said for Moderation  
 towards some who do Dissent, against the fierce debauched People  
 who are their greatest opposers.

3<sup>ly</sup>. They discover no good Opinion of the *Church*, who  
 would persuade the World she maintains her Ministers for no  
 other end, but either to Preach up severity against all who  
 scruple some Indifferences, or to keep them silent, that they  
 do not decry the violent courses some lewd prophane Pre-  
 tenders to her do put in practice : Would not this be to  
 make our Ministers like that old Register I have heard of in  
 one of the Ecclesiastical Courts, who would not suffer a cer-  
 tain *Church-Warden* to be at rest, till he would Present his  
 Neighbours who came not to the Sacrament ? The *Church-*  
*Warden* being at last overcome by his importunities, did get a  
 Presentment drawn out, and amongst those Names which were  
 set down, there was one which had Mr. before it. The Re-  
 gister spying this, thought it would be very convenient to be-

gin with this Man: And accordingly had him Summoned to the Court, and began to manage the business very briskly. But another, who had a great veneration for the Court, being present, and hearing that Man called, applied himself immediately to the Register, and ask'd him what he meant to do? Why, said the Register, I will make this Man go to the Sacrament before I have done with him, for all his *Mastership*. Nay then, said the other, you'll spoil all; for this Gentleman is *ONE OF US*, he will *Swear* and be *Drunk* as well as the *BEST* of us. Say you so, quoth the Register, then the case is altered. And immediately he called the *Church-Warden*, and chid him very sharply, telling him he was a most impudent and villanous Rakehell, in that he durst adventure to Present so worthy a Gentleman as that was. Why, said the *Church-Warden*, he did not come to the Sacrament. Why Sirrah, answered the Register, you are not to Present all who do not come to the Sacrament, but only those who scruple to receive the Sacrament on their Knees.

Some do lay a great stress on this, That several who are in Eminent Places in the *Church* are against both my Sermon and my self. But for my own part I do not much concern my self for that, *With me it is a small thing to be judged of Mans judgment*. I am willing to pay every Man the respect his particular Place, Character, Office, and Quality can require. But I hope it is no fault for a Man to wish and pray that the *Church of England* may never Sink, Perish, no, nor Suffer by the *False and Insidious Tricks* of some who pretend to her. 'Tis not the opposition of Enemies on all hands that can do us so much hurt, as the Scandal and Folly of Pretending Friends.

1 Cor. 4. 3.

Bis:op Wilkins  
Serm. p. 162.

Some are apt to believe, that evil designing Men have insinuated themselves into Places of Trust and Power, and that a degenerate kind of Pretenders to the Protestant Religion do make a great Figure at present amongst us. Whether they have ground or no for that surmize, is no business of mine to determine. Yet if any Man do think he hath too much ground for such suspicion, when he does deliberately read a late Book set forth by Mr. *Tho. Jones*, Elymas the Sorcerer. I do declare if he will be delivered from those

thoughts, he must not come to me, but go to some Body else who understands those things better. If  
*Dr. Stilling. Irenic. Phaeton drive the Chariot of the Sun, the*  
 P. 47. *World will be soon on Fire, I mean such in the*  
*Church whose Brains like the Unicorns run out in the length of the*  
*Horn, such who have more Fary than Zeal, and yet more Zeal*  
*than Knowledge or Moderation.*

*Dr. Loyd, now Bishop of St. Asaph, saith of the admirable Bishop Wilkins, that he Conformed himself to every thing that was Commanded, beyond which for any Man to be vehement in little and unnecessary things, either for or against them, he could not but dislike, and oft called it Fanaticalness. Funeral Sermon. p. 49.*

The overdoing of Conformity, that is, making more necessary to Conformity than the Laws of the Land have made necessary, is as great a fault as Nonconformity. And whoever will not be content with a man's doing as much as true Conformity doth oblige him to, but will expect he should be rough and severe with every one who Dissents from him, is a *Superfine Conformist*: And I take all such (of what Degree soever they be) to be the greatest and most dangerous Enemies to our Church, of any sort of Men in the World. From the subtle and deceitful Craftiness, and the violent Rage and Force of this sort of Men, and of their Brethren and Companions the Papists, the merciful and good Lord deliver every Sincere and Hearty Protestant.

FINIS.

*The Protestant Reconciler, Humbly Pleading for Condescension to Dissenting Brethren, in Things Indifferent and Unnecessary, for the Sake of Peace: And shewing, how Unreasonable it is to make Such Things the Necessary Conditions of Communion. By a Well-wisher to the Churches Peace, and a Lamentor of Her Sad Divisions. Printed for Awnsham Churchil, at the Black Swan near Amen-Corner, 1683.*

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